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IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Patent application:

Michael Pontone, et al.

Serial No.: 10/626,417

Filed: July 23, 2003

Examiner J. J. Swann, Group 3677

Attorney Docket: 1046-010P

RESPONSE TO RESTRICTION REQUIREMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

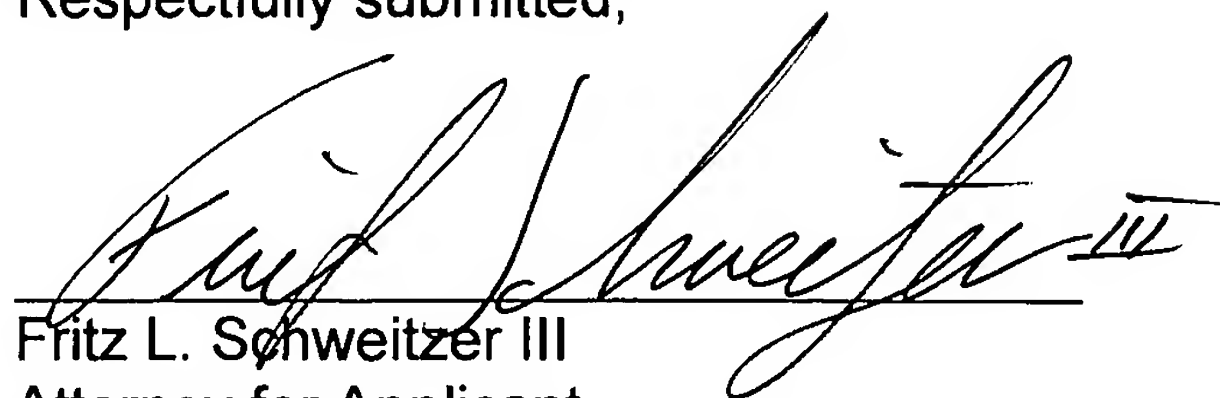
Sir:

In response to the Office Action mailed December 9, 2004, the applicant requests that the restriction requirement be reconsidered.

The stated basis for the restriction requirement was that the product claims can be made by another and materially different process than that recited in the claimed method, such as by welding. However, the sole independent product claim 12 has been amended (by an amendment submitted simultaneously herewith) to recite "said integral flange portion being crimped to and conforming to said concave inner surface of said hole." Therefore, the inventions of Group I (claims 1-11) and Group II (claims 12-16) are not distinct.

In the event that the restriction requirement is not removed, the applicant provisionally elects the claims of Group II (claims 12-16).

Respectfully submitted,

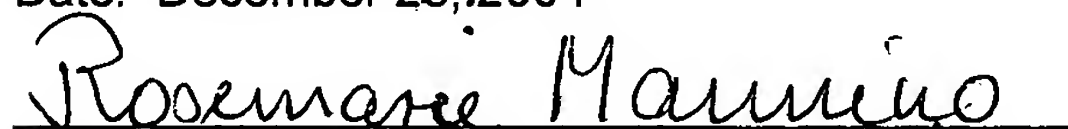


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Date: December 28, 2004


~~Gerri De Luca~~ Rosemarie Mannino